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CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY

A Quarterly devoted to Christianity and Social Reconstruction

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* This paper was presented by Sidney E. Mead as an address to the graduating class of Meadville Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, June 1954.

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CHRISTIANITY and SOCIETY

EDITORIALS

Unpredictable History

The Russian leaders Khrushchev, the party boss, and Bulganin, the Prime Minister, have gone to Belgrade and eaten crow. But they did not accomplish all of what they intended. Tito rejected every effort to bring him back into the Communist fold. He was no longer a "comrade"; and the Russians were naive in believing that the years of independence would not alter the texture of the original Communist credo. We would be as naive if we believed that the Titoists had become full-blooded democrats. Incidentally the men in Belgrade were not so simple as to believe the story that the executed Beria was responsible for the original break with Tito. They knew enough history at first hand to be incredulous about that absurd fabrication. At any rate many things had happened to both the Russians and the Yugoslavs which had never been dreamt of only five years ago. History is unpredictable.

Yet Tito did join in a communique in which he agreed with the Russians on the advisability of admitting the Chinese regime into the United Nations. He refused to become a neutralist but he added to the weight of world opinion which is bound, in the end, to change the hitherto inflexible attitude of our own nation on the question of China and the UN. But even before Tito gave us this shove, our inflexibility was dissolving almost as rapidly as the Russian inflexibility. We said we would not recognize the Chinese Communist regime but we have been forced to deal with it so frequently that we have virtually recognized it. We seemed committed to the Chinese Nationalists' cause; but now we fervently seek a cease-fire from the Communists which virtually means that we no longer recognize this particular conflict as a "civil war." We said we would not engage in a conference "at the summit"; but now we are committed to such a conference. It would be silly to expect all these unpredicted developments to change the international situation completely. The Russians and the Communists are still rather unscrupulous foes; and their empire, while in trouble, is still very formidable. It would also be wrong to expect a complete relaxation of international tensions. The Russians are out to neutralize Germany. Neither the whole West nor Germany is ready to yield to them on this issue. But the desire for German unity is great enough to offer the Russians some chances of a diplomatic victory in the conference at the summit. Unless we are careful we will in fact be outwitted by the Russians but not in the way that Senator Knowland fears. We will not be tempted to appeasement. But we might lose prestige in the non-committed world, where our loss of prestige has been considerable in recent months.

In all these unpredictable developments the possibility of atomic war has become more remote and the whole world breathes less anxiously. Yet for all the surprises of history which our little philosophies cannot anticipate, there are some continuities in history which are not easily dissolved. The communist movement with its illusions and its fanaticisms will be with us for a long time. So will the ferments of the Asian and African continents and the chance of the Communists for feeding upon the resentments and discontents of the "colonial"

CONVERSATION is the title of a new feature which appears elsewhere in this issue. You are invited to eavesdrop. Better still, you are invited to participate.

peoples. The impatience of our own nation with the frustrations of history will also not be overcome very quickly though it is yielding to experience. History, as it unrolls before our eyes, is confounding both the professional optimists and the constitutional pessimists. We will not be wholly "saved" or lost in the next few years or even decades. Great perils still hang over us as the Sword of Damocles. But it is reassuring to note that none of the seemingly inevitable catastrophes have happened, that the great and monstrous dictator, Stalin, is dead and that the "collegiate" dictatorship of the Russians is not very impressive. Yet the security of our atomic superiority has only a short range; and meanwhile the Russian bombers are equalling, or may be surpassing, the speed of our bombers.

It is comforting to know that the forces of history are not as intractable as our theories tend to assume; but it is also disquieting that they are not as malleable as is assumed in other theories. The providence of God is in short more mysterious and meaningful than all the philosophies by which we try to capture the meaning of our history. R. N.

Some Predictions

Having discoursed on the unpredictable nature of history, let us somewhat inconsistently turn to future events which can be predicted with a fair degree of certainty. The presidential nominating conventions are only a year hence. Everyone is predicting that President Eisenhower will be renominated. This is almost a foregone conclusion because it has become apparent that Republicans are in a minority in the nation and that only Eisenhower's popularity can assure their victory. Therefore the pressure from the politicos will be immense. Eisenhower may or may not be reluctant. He is probably consciously reluctant because the duties of the presidency are back-breaking. But he is probably unconsciously not reluctant because of the sweetness of power and his dedication to the cause of international responsibility and peace. Whatever his mood, though, he is bound to yield to the pressure of the party.

But let us pass from this virtual inevitability to what may be a more surprising certainty. It is this: Adlai Stevenson is almost as certain of being nominated by the Democrats as Eisenhower is by the Republicans.

Stevenson's nomination is a practical certainty because the polls show that he is the only candidate who would have even an "outside" chance of defeating Eisenhower. That is why the other candidates, Kefauver and Symington, for instance, are bowing out. Stevenson will have the field for himself and he is bound to run because the party will put the same pressure on him as the Republicans put on Eisenhower.

Has he a chance of defeating Eisenhower? In answer to that question we had better revert to the original proposition about the unpredictable character of history. Certainly he has a better chance than is usually assumed. Some, though not all, of Eisenhower's appeal has worn off. The votes of all illusionists, who thought a Republican victory would dissolve all the insoluble problems which fret us, will be lost. The communist menace is still with us and Eisenhower has met it, thank God, about as the previous administration met it, after the slogans of "liberation" and "massive retaliation" had been discarded to the relief of our friends and allies.

Labor will be more solidly opposed to the Republicans than in the previous election. The farmers will definitely be split in their allegiance. Stevenson can make as much of the irresponsibility of the Republican nationalists as Roosevelt did of "Martin, Barton and Fish." Eisenhower always had the wisdom to defy the nationalists in the end, but he came close to disaster several times by trying to appease the party's right wing. His triumph is by no means a foregone conclusion. It should be an interesting campaign. R. N.

Eden's Victory

There are some uniquely British elements in Labor's defeat at the hands of the Tory party under the leadership of the new leader, Sir Anthony Eden. The split in the Labor party under the impetus of "Bevanism," for instance, was one of the contributing factors. But it is a question whether Labor could have won even if united. For the victory represents a pattern in Western, at least in Anglo-Saxon, democracy. That pattern is for the opposing party to take over the "welfare state" policy of the labor or the democratic party, to promise more scope for private initiative and to defeat the original proponent of these policies. The victories of Eisenhower and of Eden are thus based upon a similar logic, consisting in a basic acceptance of the welfare state but also in a promise of the relaxation of controls for the sake of encouraging initiative.

The similarity consists further in the narrow political distance between the two political parties. The only difference is one of emphasis upon control of economic life and upon the measure of freedom which is to be allowed within this control. Healthy democracies seem to have reached a peak of the mountain where there is not much difference between the right and the left side of the mountain. A pessimistic view of this situation is that modern democracies have reached a "stalemate" and have no clear sense of direction. A more optimistic view is that the essential unity between opposing parties guarantees the social peace of the community. This peace is guaranteed not only by the political struggle but by the kind of collective bargaining in which labor and management are engaged, of which the Ford negotiations are an interesting exemplar.

The sudden developments of strikes on the docks and by the railroad workers, immediately after the Tory victory, are, however, a rude reminder that all is not as well with the British economy as the Tories pretended or believed during the campaign. Briefly put, British industry is at a disadvantage in international competition with the rapidly expanding German industry. It is handicapped both by the greater military expenditures which the British economy must bear and by the higher wages which it must pay. There is no rapidly expanding economy in Britain, as in America to solve every dispute. In fact, one wonders when history will catch up with us, when our expansion, depending partly upon the fantastic living standards of our nation and partly on the expansion of heavy industry throughout the world will put an end to the conditions which make the escalator clauses in our bargaining contracts possible. The time may be far off, but we must realize that our reputation for increasing wisdom and justice in industrial relations rests upon an expanding economy which will not last forever.

R. N.

The "GAW" and the American Economy

The remarkable achievement of the United Automobile Workers in their negotiations with Ford and General Motors delivers us from the assumption that the workers should be the first victims of industrial instability, that they should take the greatest risks as human beings in an economy that emphasized the risk of the entrepreneur. These contracts indicate that industrial relations have become civilized in the automobile industry. Anyone who lived through the thirties knows for how much he can be thankful.

The principle that labor should not bear the full brunt of unemployment was accepted when unemployment insurance was established but this has always been niggardly at best. Now unemployment compensation is more nearly adequate and the employers have a greater stake in preventing unemployment. There is here a decisive break with the idea that labor is a commodity to be used as is convenient by the employer.

The phrase, "guaranteed annual wage," suggested real illusions because there can be no unconditional guarantees of the kind that seemed to be implied. But what was achieved was a guarantee limited in fact to

half a year and by the size of a fund set aside for the purpose. We cannot guarantee perpetual prosperity or the freedom of the most powerful industry from great dislocations.

Many problems remain but it is better to begin by hailing the great gain that has been made rather than by emphasizing the problems. How will this affect workers in smaller or less privileged industries? How can the rigidities that may come from this be counteracted? The deepest problem is the problem of our whole dynamic economy. How can we continue indefinitely to consume the product of our expanding industry? The automobile industry is now stressing the "two car" family. Where will it all end? We can ask that question of our national life as a whole while we rejoice that a pattern has been established that makes the employing corporation share in a new way with the workers the hazards of unemployment.

J. C. B.

Federal Initiative and Mrs. Hobby

In this journal we have been critical of our own tendency in an earlier period to be doctrinaire in supporting collectivistic solutions of national problems. Today it is important to emphasize an open-minded approach to the function of the state which is free from the anti-state doctrines held within the present administration. The confusion over the Salk vaccine has come in part from wrong ideas about the state that are widely held in government circles and for which Mrs. Hobby has become the chief spokesman in this context. This is an obvious case where the over-all authority and competence of the federal government made it the only agency that could deal with this problem. The inhibitions of the administration are here combined with those of the medical profession with its dogmatic opposition to state initiative. It is good to have our Canadian neighbors who have had a sensible policy from the beginning and who, without saying anything about it, make us look foolish. We needed to correct the overemphasis on federal initiative made natural by depression and war, but now we need to correct the correction in such matters as electric power, housing, education, and public health. This is probably the most substantial issue dividing the two parties so far as their national leadership is concerned.

J. C. B.

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The Annual Conference

The Fifth Annual Conference of Christian Action was held on June 9-11, 1955, at Morgan State College, Baltimore, Maryland. A report on the conference will be found in the July-August *Newsletter*.

The Institute of Ethics and Politics

ROBERT A. GESSERT

The report of Commission VI of the World Council of Churches to the Evanston Assembly began: "It is an almost universal conviction revealed in many reports that there exists at present a gulf between Christian preaching and teaching and man's actual experience of life."[1] The Commission's survey elaborates this "estrangement" with reference to the layman in his daily work.

The report of Commission III to the same Assembly included this statement from Sweden in its survey of European religio-social thought: "theological thinking has given very little help in approaching the ethical problems involved in concrete economic and political problems . . . the decisions on social questions of today have been left to laymen."[2] One suspects that there are not very many people who would vigorously defend the American situation against such an indictment.

Both versions of this "gap"—between theological thinking and teaching and concrete social, economic, and political decisions—are set in the context of surveys which also record a "renewal" of theology with rediscovered dimensions of "relevance." Evidently the nature of the gap to which attention is being called and efforts at remedy are being invoked is less that of an absolute gap between "transcendent" insights of religion and "immanent" choices of life and more that of a provisional gap—a failure of communication and of genuine dialectic—between those who analyze society theologically and those who must daily make decisions affecting the patterns of their "secular" life or, in varying degrees, the life of society as a whole.

Probably it is those sensitive persons who must make decisions of wide public import—the "public policy makers"—who most acutely experience this gap between what they understand to be theology or theological ethics and the concrete policy decisions they face. That this is so must give us some disquietude about how far beyond ecclesiastical circles the political "relevance" of theology has spread and, indeed, about whether the dilemmas of the policy decision makers have sufficiently been taken into account in theologians' analyses of society. The Church's concern for the "responsible society" and its concern for the layman and his occupational and theological self-understanding are united when the layman in question is the public policy maker.

Men in public office and professional leadership today are charged increasingly with responsibilities, often against their wills, of making decisions about policies which crucially affect the lives of multitudes. The readers of this journal are well aware that few if any of the most important decisions policy makers face can be settled on the "technical" grounds of choosing the most effective "means" for achieving commonly accepted "ends." Consider foreign policy dealing with the United States' relation to Russia and Red China, trade policies, technical assistance, immigration laws; or domestic problems such as the use of public resources, tax laws, the dilemmas of an expanding economy, farm programs, internal security, civil rights, welfare programs, desegregation; or industrial problems such as the guaranteed annual wage, automation, etc. All of these are issues involving human rights and social justice, claims and counterclaims, choices among relative goods and evils. All are ambiguous as well as technically complex. All involve risk as well as calculation, faith as well as reason, ethics as well as politics.

Sensitive policy makers are well aware that the deepest theological and ethical insights are often required of them: that they

1. *The Christian Hope and the Task of the Church;* Harper & Brothers, New York; 1954; "The Laity—the Christian in His Vocation," p. 4.
2. *Ibid.;* "Social Questions—the Responsible Society in a World Perspective," p. 30.

are called upon to face policy dilemmas in the light of self-critical and self-conscious attempts to understand the inner meaning of civilization—the nature of man, society, and history and the limits and possibilities of political and public action in our age. Yet it is only the exceptional individual—rare in the Church, rare in "secular" society—who combines competent social, economic, and political analysis with insights of theological ethics. If such individuals are to be less rare, some new and more systematic efforts at bridging the gap will have to be made. Such efforts will have to be made increasingly from both sides—from the side of theological ethical disciplines and from the side of the social analysis and policy disciplines. They will have to be made increasingly by policy makers themselves.

One concrete effort in this direction, in which several members of Christian Action have played major roles, is now being formulated and projected as "The Institute of Ethics and Politics" located at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. The constituency of the Institute will be men and women who are now or will be public policy makers. The focus of the Institute's inquiry will be the theological and ethical dimensions of actual policy decisions in which the Institute's constituency are participants.

While the idea of the Institute reflects the concerns of Church leaders about the general cultural milieu as indicated above, the specific proposal which led to the creation of the project arose out of discussion among sensitive students—graduate and undergraduate—seeking a sense of vocation about future "secular" careers in public affairs: government and politics, business and labor, law and medicine. The political commission of the United Student Christian Council became the major forum for articulating this proposal nearly five years ago. The USCC through its commission called for the development of an ecumenical institute in which persons entering upon public affairs vocations would have the chance to supplement their regular professional training with an intensive examination of the relation of their religious understanding and loyalties to the kinds of decisions they would be called upon to make in their careers. It asked for the chance for men to reflect critically and theologically about their chosen careers, without dogmatism, and in the company of other men representing a variety of kinds of public service, together with recognized leaders and teachers from these professions who were also sensitive to this kind of concern and capable of guiding such an inquiry.

The USCC found a ripe response to its proposal among several influential university and graduate professional school faculty members as well as among leaders of religious organizations concerned with lay vocations and the responsible society. As a result of fruitful contacts developed with members of the faculties of Yale University Divinity School and The Public Affairs Center at Wesleyan University and with several staff members of the National Council of Churches, a major consultation was called in June, 1953, to consider preliminary but detailed plans for the Institute. This conference created an autonomous executive committee for the Institute and charged it with the responsibility of designing a more permanent structure for the Institute, developing the proposal more systematically, and seeking funds for the underwriting of the program envisaged.

Toward the end of 1954 the temporary executive committee had discharged its principal functions in a detailed prospectus of the purpose, program, and structure of the Institute. It had also begun to lay an important foundation of wide contacts with individual professional and educational leaders and also with other institutions and organizations which indicated a vital concern with the Institute's projected program. Co-operation and encouragement, as for example, from persons associated with some of the corporation executive training programs, from individuals within organizations like the Committee for Economic Development, from the National Council on Religion and Higher Education, have already shown the potential fruit of such contacts. The temporary committee closed its work in the fall of 1954 by making pos-

sible the incorporation of the Institute with an autonomous Board of Directors.

The program of The Institute of Ethics and Politics as it has been hammered out over the period outlined above seeks the development of three quite tangible objectives: 1. a training center to serve a select group of men who are in their formative years in public affairs vocations or in their latter years of graduate professional training; 2. a national center for study, research, and writing on the interrelationship of ethics, theology, and public policy; 3. an informal, broadly-based "community of discourse" made up of persons seriously concerned about the relation of ethics and theology to public policy.

I

The training center will focus in a summer seminar program supplemented by conferences of shorter duration during the academic year. The summer seminar will draw together about forty highly-qualified men for guided and sustained inquiry and discussion lasting about seven weeks. Participants will represent professions in public affairs fields such as government, politics, business, labor, law, communications, medicine, and the ministry. They will be selected for and sponsored in their study on the basis of academic qualifications, professional promise, and a serious desire to enter into a free inquiry which raises religious and ethical considerations in explicit relation to their own professions.

There will be a resident "faculty" of six to eight members, representing the fields enumerated and including at least one recognized theologian, responsible for the overall direction of the seminars. All of the faculty members will be expected to engage co-operatively in the instruction of a core course on "Ethics and Public Policy," to teach in smaller seminars relating to their own professions, to guide individual research and writing, and to counsel with "students" about vocational decisions. In addition to the full-time resident faculty, there will be a limited number of men brought to the center for special lectures.

While the idea for the Institute originated in Protestant circles, it is not the intent to limit the discussion to Protestant theology and ethics. It is anticipated that most of the participants will have affinity to one of the major religious traditions of American society: Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish. Genuine openness and a desire to appropriate the resources of one's religious tradition rather than an attempt to measure one's religious commitment will be the religious criterion of selection of participants. It is to be stressed that the intent is inquiry not indoctrination—inquiry that is free and candid as well as respectful of religious traditions.

Readings in theology and theological ethics will receive considerable emphasis in the curriculum of the seven-week study program of the training center. It will be assumed that all of the men have already done intensive study in the disciplines traditionally related to their own professions. As previously indicated, the major or core course which will be required of all the students will be "Ethics and Public Policy." This course will focus on policy areas which obviously involve inter-professional participation and will presuppose a. the necessity of considering the interests of many social groups and the combined insights of a variety of specializations in the formation of policies in major institutions, and b. the inescapable role of one's world-view and consequent social ethics in policy decision making. The smaller seminars, also mentioned above, will be organized professionally for the most part and stress those areas of decision which can be relatively isolated as matters of specific professional concern.

II

A major aspect of the development of a national center for study, research, and writing will be the collection of relevant books and fugitive materials into a library of ethics and politics and the maintenance of an information and reference service. With the aid of such a library and reference system, the Institute will be in a position to encourage and facilitate various research projects in ethics and politics. The Institute will also sponsor and publish *ad hoc* writing

projects through its contacts with other institutions and through its informal community of persons concerned in this area. It will also administer grants for academic research during the regular academic year.

III

The "community of discourse" of persons concerned with ethics and politics will be developed and fostered principally among "alumni" of the training program. The visiting faculties and members of the various advisory and consulting bodies of the Institute would also compose this community. The Institute will publish and circulate among these persons periodic bulletins of news, announcements, reviews of important literature, and other pertinent information. It is likely that other efforts—perhaps loosely paralleling some of the activities of the National Council on Religion in Higher Education, such as a kind of "week of work" at the end of each summer session—aimed at expressing this community will be developed.

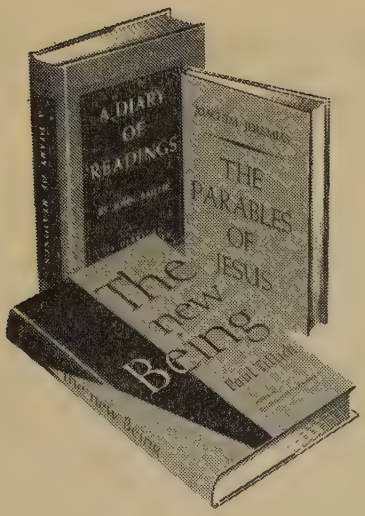
The creation of the Institute with an autonomous Board of Directors was a strategy rather deliberately calculated to help foster this last objective and to insure an "ecumenical" principle of breadth of participation in the program as a whole. Autonomy for the Institute is not a way of achieving independence of other institutions; rather it is a way of achieving flexible and voluntary interdependence with them. A number of movements in higher education, in politics, in business and labor, in religion shall continue to share through their leaders in the formation and direction of the Institute's work. The present Board includes, for example, some persons who have been deeply involved in the development of programs of vocational education seeking to relate social science, ethics, and theology in the National Council of Churches, in the National Council on Religion in Higher Education, and in the United Student Christian Council. Six members of the present eight-man Board have been active members of Christian Action—four having served on its Executive Council.

Yet the Institute's very close relation to Wesleyan University is equally auspicious. Quite practically, the University has greatly reduced the problem of putting the Institute into operation by making available to it the use of office, classroom, and dormitory space and by sharing some personnel and library facilities. But the location of the Institute at Wesleyan is also in other ways extremely favorable for the development of the program. The University has a long tradition of preparing men for both public affairs and religious service. Quite recently a new Public Affairs Center has been opened on the campus, bringing under one roof the departments of government, economics, and history. This Center symbolizes the concern of these departments to bring various kinds of social analysis, including theological analysis, to bear on problems of public policy. The Institute will be housed in the Public Affairs Center and have a continuity of research, study, and teaching with the University faculty. Victor L. Butterfield, President of Wesleyan University, is Chairman of the Institute's Board of Directors.

Practically all of what has been said in this report of the Institute's program has been said in the future tense. In the two years since the idea acquired a name, a committee, and a part-time staff, most of what has been done has been in the nature of "development"—both as intensive formulation and elaboration of the purpose and projected program of the Institute and as seeking funds to sponsor the full-scale program. The present time table looks for the initial operation of the summer training program in the summer of 1956. In the meantime, many other aspects of the program are now being put into operation—some in an experimental way. For example, during the coming academic year 1955-56 the Institute will sponsor a series of five consultations of two or three days each in business, law, and government and politics.

Even while many of the other objectives of the Institute are becoming tangible, the extended training center remains the crucial aspect for which funds are being actively sought. An intensive program of study and

(continued on page 18)



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Some Current Forms of Infidelity: An Address to "Liberal" Theologues

SIDNEY E. MEAD

To speak to the graduating class in a professedly "liberal" Seminary might be considered somewhat hazardous. I am told that Ralph Waldo Emerson did it, and was not invited back for thirty years. And all he had said in his innocent way was that the historic church represented an "Eastern Monarchy of a Christianity" which "indolence and fear" had built upon two great errors; that the Professors in the School perpetuated these errors with a view of miracles that was monstrous; that many ministers were formalists who tempted him to say he "would go to church no more"; and that the only expectation that the young hopefuls before him might "rekindle the smouldering, nigh quenched fire on the altar" was based on their ability "to go alone," to cast all conformity behind them, and become "new born bards of the Holy Ghost."

Of course he also included a surprisingly "conservative" reference to "the sublime creed," and cautioned his auditors that "all attempts to project and establish a Cultus with new rites and forms" were "cold" and "vain"—"today, pasteboard and filigree, and ending tomorrow in madness and murder" as witness "the new worship introduced by the French to the goddess of Reason."

But to those whose sober Yankee souls were not "ravished" by the falling rain, the growing grass, the bursting buds, as was his, what he said seemed merely "the latest form of infidelity" incased in a lot of sheer nonsense about "the religious sentiment" which Emerson said was "mountain air"; was "myrrh and storax, and chlonine and rosemary"; was "the embalmer of the world."

Thus warned by Emerson's experience, I have thought to play it safe in my "Divinity School Address" by inveighing against some latest forms of infidelity rather than by promulgating them.

The urge to do so began to build up within me last spring when I received a flattering letter from the headquarters of a distinguished denomination inviting me to take part in a program called TARGETS FOR TOMORROW. The very word "Targets" appealed to my pioneering spirit, and this, plus an offer to pay my expenses, made the offer irresistible. I accepted immediately.

In preparation for the program we participants were sent mimeographed instructions, which admonished us to think about how "we may advance the cause of liberal religion"; to try to "pin-point the obstacles which impede our growth"; and to attempt to conjure up "devices" we can "create to remove or by-pass these obstacles." "These questions," it was added, "will be asked in five separate areas," namely:

1. Making religion more satisfying emotionally.
2. Establishing more and stronger churches.
3. Making our churches more inclusive.
4. Telling our story to others.
5. Helping to create one world.

I was asked to "report" on the first—"making religion more satisfying emotionally."

The "reporting" requires some explanation. You see, the total body of 250 to 300 people was divided into twenty discussion groups—each under a trained (or at least "briefed") leader. Four of these groups applied themselves to each of the five topics for two hours in the afternoon. At dinner—one hour—the four leaders in the discussion of my topic each tried to pump the findings of his particular group into me between the soup and the coffee. And all I was expected to do was to synthesize and summarize their findings, and "editorialize" upon them in a witty, ten-minute presentation before the public that night.

I am happy to note that the other four "reporters" did this, and did it exceptionally well. But, on the other hand, I am not

too unhappy to report that I probably succeeded in squelching my budding reputation for being that kind of a journalist.

These are the essential facts of the case—of course not unmingled with some interpretation. From here on I want to "editorialize"—or perhaps a better description would be, to "professorialize"—on them.

First then, in the context of the tradition of congregational polity in which I was reared, the project was rightly and even magnificently conceived and organized. The earliest proponents of that polity in America held that the truth is to be arrived at through discussion and disputation in a Synod made up of both clerical and lay people. And what were these discussion groups but little Synods in modern dress? In this fashion, it was held of old, God speaks through the body of the Congregation.

It seems to me that there is something profoundly right about this view. I never cease to be thrilled by watching a group of earnest people discuss a topic—and, like Emerson, I often see Jove nodding to Jove behind the participants' most banal comments. For one who knows the history of a people, knows that individuals many times unconsciously speak out of a tradition which has formed them, and thus transcend their ordinary work-a-day selves, speaking more wisdom than they know. This is why we can have a patient confidence in the wisdom of "the people" so long as they are permitted to talk while leaders listen.

But there is "one stern condition"—the discussion must be free. This does not mean that there must be no definite topic for discussion, or that the people must not focus all the intelligence, insight, powers of logical analysis, and even rhetoric they have on it. Nor does it mean abandonment of *Roberts' Rules of Order.* Quite the contrary.

But one of the subtle forms of the present infidelity to man which threatens to stifle the free flow of conversation among the people out of which wisdom comes, is the suggestion that discussing is itself a discipline, with rules and techniques that are to be defined and mastered only by trained professionals. Thus when it was proposed that a certain ministers' association should set up Institutes for the mutual enlightenment and edification of its members, one of the first suggestions made was that they must get a "professional"—salaried of course—to organize and direct them, "or else we won't get anywhere." And a lay woman, who in the course of an afternoon's discussion of how to make religion more satisfying emotionally was sharp enough to suggest that "we should get God in there someplace," later depreciated her contribution with the comment, "I suppose I just don't know the techniques of discussion." Well might we paraphrase Emerson's sentence to read, wherever the discussion is usurped by a technician, there are the discussers defrauded and frustrated—Jove packs up, and nods behind no such technically self-conscious heads.

But beyond this, I was bothered from the beginning by the suggestion that we try to contrive "devices" to make religion more satisfying emotionally. This suggests a more serious current form of infidelity to man which violates his very nature.

What is obviously wrong-headed here is the implication that the problem of making religion more satisfying emotionally can be reduced to one of techniques—which is to put religion on the level of "Show Business," and would seem to suggest the manipulation of people in a way quite antagonistic to any "liberal" conception of faith.

Of course this is quite in keeping with a tendency of the modern age to think of "reason" only as technical or manipulative reason, and to conceive all the problems of man in relationship to his fellows and his cosmos on the analogy of the technical problems of a great machine.

Now I have no objection to the machine as such, and, in Bertrand Russell's words, "It is only when the machine takes the place of God that I object to it." For then the machine becomes "an end in itself" and human beings are seen, through the analogy, as "cogs," praying the prayer that Russell puts into their mouths:

Almighty and most . . . [practical] ma-

chine, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost screws; we have put in those nuts which we ought not to have put in; and we have left out those nuts which we ought to have put in, and there is no cogginess in us.

Perhaps if Mr. Russell were more of a churchman, he would have added a prayer for denominational administrators in a reference to the necessity for periodic chassis lubrication and the benefits of regular oil changes.

In this kind of context is developed the related tendency to think of religion in general and of Christianity in particular, as the great universal monkey-wrench that fits every nut in the universe. Jesus, I have been told again and again, is the "tool," and presumably is to be used to tighten up all the loose connections in the realm of human affairs. Said Emerson of the "formalists" of his day, "the remedy to their deformity is first soul, and second soul, and ever more soul." And perhaps this still makes more sense than the modern version of "first tools, and second techniques, and ever more and more techniques and tools."

Thus far I have, following Emerson, pointed out "two errors" in the present administration of the churches "which daily appear more gross. . . ."

I am happy to report that the people in the discussion groups I sat with confirmed my faith in their sober wisdom by repudiating both. One discusser especially, warned against reliance on "gimmicks," and all spoke of the basic need for wholeness, for integrity, for honesty, for genuineness, in all the services and works of the church—while Jove and I nodded our approval.

But these people did much more than merely to repudiate such patent "errors," and it is incumbent upon me to try to summarize what they said in positive fashion on the topic of "how to make religion more satisfying emotionally." In doing so I shall, of course, exercise the "editorializing" prerogative granted me. This means that they might not recognize their thoughts clothed in my words. But I am willing to contend that I have added nothing essential to what they contributed. Perhaps I have left something out.

One's religion is defined by what he truly loves, and this it is that gives him his deepest emotional satisfaction as a man. Now love cannot be forced; and emotional satisfaction must be spontaneous. There is an old saying that "being a gentleman is like being happy, if you have to try to be you aren't." ". . . the least attempt to make a good impression, a favorable appearance—will instantly vitiate the effect," Emerson noted. And the testimony of all the great religious characters that I know is that the same thing is true about being religious—if you have to try to be you aren't. Yet there is a sentiment abroad today in the denominations that is closely analogous to that revealed by an Officer in the American army of occupation in Japan, who closed the harangue to his neophytes with the words: "Now get out there and make them damn Japs love you!"

It is not then a question of making one's religion more satisfying emotionally, but rather the question of the adequacy to a man as man of that which gives him his deepest emotional satisfactions, and the question of the general acceptability (when judged by current intellectual standards) of the modes of expressing such satisfactions in public.

The problem for modern man as religious is whether or not he can believe that he can and does have a respectable knowledge of that which most truly satisfies his deepest yearnings as a man. And this is the question of whether or not modern man can achieve a genuine integrity or wholeness of his intellectual and emotional expressions of himself and his relations to his fellow men and to his cosmos.

This is the problem which *our* history thrusts upon us. For, since the beginning of the nineteenth century—at least in America—the theology and cultus of the bulk of the denominations has been out of step with the thinking, the spirit and ideals of modern civilization. I do not mean to imply that the latter has been right and the former wrong, but merely to make an observation about the basic sickness of our civilization. Hence it is not too far wrong to say

that since the Enlightenment Americans have been confronted with the hard choice between being intelligent and being religious. Not unnaturally many became schizophrenic trying to be intelligent in the Schools and other intellectual circles and religious in the churches and other religious circles—but whole in neither. This condition has become practically "normal" in America, as it long ago became "ultra-orthodox."

Hence, for example, educational leaders in our Universities, the centers of our burgeoning intellectual life, have never known quite what to do with Theological Schools in their midst which pretended to train ministers for the parishes of the land. Conversely, "practical" churchmen in the United States have by and large been suspicious of nothing more than University training for ministers, unless at every point the Professors demonstrated how the learned substance of their lectures and articles could easily be made into parish mince-meat and served from the pulpit on Sunday morning. Today a Professor in a Theological School can never feel completely secure so long as one student gets through without knowing how to run mimeographing and projecting machines. This tends mightily to confuse the educational program by putting A. B. Dick, Underwood, Bell and Howell on a dead level in the curriculum with Augustine, Luther, H. W. Beecher, and Reinhold Niebuhr. In the course of a visit to a large church in Boston last spring I noticed a mimeographing machine in the outer office on which was a sign in bold red letters which spelled out the single word "Danger." This seemed to me to be a step in the right direction.

Granted the existing situation, the top administrators in University related Seminaries have been forced to pattern themselves after Janus, with his unique physical and mental equipment that enabled him always to face in two directions at once, and to speak out of either of two mouths as occasion demanded. Such Seminaries have been possible in America largely because some men so gifted have been willing to engage in a kind of sanctified duplicity—which is known as being "politically realistic," and is reminiscent of Dostoyevesky's "suffering inquisitor" and his "clever people." Their work has permitted, and perhaps in America only their work can permit, the long-range intellectual task of theological reconstruction required by the true aims of a University to be carried on under the guise of ministering directly to the immediate practical needs of parishes as demanded by what denominational officialdom refers to as "the constituency."

Whether or not the work of these men abstractly considered is "good" or "bad" is a question purely "academic" in the worst sense of that much abused word. Granted *our* historical situation, their work is, and has been, necessary—and that is that. Personally I am willing to leave the question of their ultimate salvation with the pronouncement of highest authority—"With God all things are possible."

But the very success of their necessary work is likely to lure theological professors and students, and ministers, into the supposition that such subterfuge is of the essence of the religious life in the modern world, and thus tempt them before the dawn to give up the wrestle with the real problem that makes it necessary.

Sensing this, one of my students put his finger on the heart of the matter by noting that "there has always been a tendency in America to reduce religion either to a social, ethical, intellectual system, or to an emotional sentimentality." For example, the Unitarians have commonly taken the first route. They began by rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity largely because it no longer made sense to them intellectually—as when the congregation at Kings Chapel purged the Prayer Book of references to the Trinity at about the time that they purged it of prayers for the King. But the Methodists, who had separated themselves from the same Episcopal Church the year before, preferred to keep the Trinity, although in the context of their revivalistic sentimentality it can hardly be said to have made any more sense to them than to their erstwhile brethren of Kings Chapel. Subsequently the Unitarians have commonly thought the

Methodists weren't intelligent, and the Methodists have commonly thought that the Unitarians were coldly intellectual—and the tragedy of Christianity in America is that both have always been more than a little right and more than a little wrong. The former, for example, have not always been notably intelligent in their assessment of the place of Methodist "emotionalism" in religion—as Theodore Parker warned them —and the latter have sometimes betrayed their professed fidelity to man's emotional nature by supposing that emotional satisfactions need no intellectual criticism or defense.

Here, indeed, is the nub of the problem of making religion more satisfying emotionally. It is, in brief, the problem of achieving a genuine integrity or wholeness of intellectual and emotional expression—in the face of a long adverse history. "Our ancestors," said one of the discussers, meaning thereby her "liberal religious forebears," "suppressed the emotional side so much that it now pops up as a problem in 1954." This is one of the right observations. Another questioned, "why is it that intellectual people seem usually to be emotionally inhibited when it comes to religion?" This is one of the right questions.

It is such observations and such questions that confirm my belief that we who sit in professional chairs, or stand in pulpits, or even with denominational officials, should listen carefully to what the people say. In this case what they said in positive fashion was magnificent. And one thing was notable, there seemed to be no defender of the "spiritualist" view that religiously the individual can go it alone in solitary communion with his God—no one suggested in Thomas Paine's phrase, "my mind is my church."

The consensus was—and it seemed to me unanimous—that the ultimate satisfaction comes from a sense of belonging to a community that demands commitment and involvement, and permits free participation in shared activities. One group leader thus summarized the sense of his meeting: "We need to cultivate a sense of togetherness in a way that gives each individual a chance to contribute spontaneously to the internal life of the group, and to participate freely in some of those activities wherein the group is related to or impinges upon the larger inclusive community." And, it was added, "This calls for mutual tolerance of various activities and expressions of emotional satisfaction." Lastly, it was suggested that this community "needs to relate us to our heritage, helping us to share the great experiences of the race."

It takes no genius to see that what these people were talking about is what has traditionally been known as "the church"—but so thin has the line of continuity with the tradition worn that they would be apt to think one was going high-brow or, worse yet, "theological" on them if he pointed this out.

And yet, the community which the above specifications demand must be one that relates the individual in acceptable ways, first to his fellows in the present; second to his past, his tradition, and third to his cosmos. Such a community must transcend the individual in obvious ways. It transcends him physically and spatially, being inclusive of all sorts and conditions of men, everywhere. It transcends him in time; it existed before he was born, and presumably will continue to exist long after he dies. It thus has a kind of massive historical stability—an inertia and momentum in time which for the individual—and especially the minister—to ignore is to step prematurely into "the long shadows of oblivion" and "decease forever."

In more subtle ways it transcends the individual in wisdom, in spiritual stature, and in favor with man and God. It is acceptance "Just as I am, without one plea" that makes belonging to such a community emotionally satisfying. And this means that it must be primarily a community of love and forgiveness. For, humanness being what it is, no community can accept a man just as he is, unless it be forgiving in nature. And only a community that mediates forgiveness to each member—a community that accepts him in a sense in spite of himself and will not let him go—can assuage the common human feeling of rejection and estrangement that gnaws at the human's vitals. It

is the mediation of this profound emotional satisfaction that is celebrated in worship. Where it is present, worship is free and spontaneous, and granted this we need never fear that the community will lack the resources and common sense to develop proper forms, means and techniques.

For about a generation the religiously literate in America have been charmed with the idea of "Moral Man and Immoral Society"—and in a way that has tended to make us suspicious of all our organizations. But let us not lose sight of the fact that it is also true that the community, the society, the local church—just as it is—is constantly luring individuals on to transcend their present selves both morally and spiritually. Society may be immoral, but the highest morality flows only from people in societies.

Wherever men meet as brothers, wherever the good news is preached, wherever the hungry are fed, the naked clothed, the sick and imprisoned visited for God's sake and not for the titillation of human pride—there Christ dwells, there is forgiveness mediated, human frailty transcended, and the image of God in the soul of man made manifest. There is the church.

It is this kind of saving community for which the people grope—through their sunshine and their darkness; in rejoicing and in disappointment; in their strength and in their weakness; in their knowledge and in their ignorance. This is what I find them doing all about me—in the market, in the classroom, in the churches—yes, and even in the innumerable discussion groups that are set up all over this broad land to talk about "Targets for Tomorrow"! Indeed, "this homely game of life we play, covers, under what seem foolish details, principles that astonish."

The first task of the minister is to recognize this groping of the people for what it really is—to recognize it where it exists in very simple forms, and even in the repulsive dress of publicans and sinners. The second task is to teach these presently groping people that in their seeking they are continuous with an innumerable host which surrounds them as a "great cloud of witnesses," relating them to the long tradition in which they live, and move, and have their being. The third task is to help them to appropriate or devise expressions of their hearts' sincere desire in worship forms of dignity and beauty—that neither do violence to its expressions in the past, nor violate the intellectual integrity of the present. Many were the wise and practical suggestions made in the discussion groups about just how this can be done.

And now, my dear young graduates and self-professed "liberals," I have warned you that as you stand on the threshold of the ministry you are in danger of being betrayed by certain current analogies into some of the latest forms of infidelity to man. One is the analogy of the salesmen and the advertisers, who would admonish you to go forth equipped with slick new slogans as recently hired hucksters of the Holy Ghost, engaged in the great campaign "to put God over." The second is the analogy of the mechanics, who would admonish you to grasp the great universal tool of religion and set about tightening up the loose connections in the universe, not forgetting that all moving parts require oil. The third is the analogy of the professional administrators or managers, who would admonish you to be "politically realistic" and to recognize that the highest aspiration of man is to keep his inherited ecclesiastical machines running smoothly.

Because of the nature of "liberalism" in America, it has been peculiarly open to the spirit, ideas and ideals of modern civilization both good and bad; to contrary currents of opinion, and to "the acids of modernity" which have eaten away the religious faith of millions. For this reason you are peculiarly susceptible to the current forms of infidelity, where your more "conservative" counterparts are likely to be lured and betrayed by more orthodox heresies. I suggest that a salutary corrective for both extremes is the cultivation of the sense of historical continuity and perspective. You can in this way dedicate a part of your abilities and energies to the task of making your fellow "liberals" more Christian, and your fellow Christians more "liberal."

Above all, the "liberal" tradition calls you

to keep the great conversation about religious matters going in America, and to make it as intelligent as you can. On the basis of your principles, discussion is the thing, and the statement and defense of differences a duty. Your attitude may sometimes be that of the old deacon who said, "I am willing to be convinced—but I'd like to see the man who could convince me." Nevertheless, where two or three "liberals" gather, there should be a discussion—and if there are differences there should be an argument. To my mind, one of the most hopeful things in the present situation is the capacity of "liberals" of all shades of theological opinion for self-criticism—and their ability at times even to laugh at themselves. The first, I think, is a mark of grace, and humor is next to godliness.

Finally, I have tried to suggest that true fidelity to man requires that you take him seriously in all his possible dimensions—not looking upon him just as a customer to be "sold," a nut to be tightened, or a cog to be oiled. For man is the great chaos of "the people"—and lovable chaos over which the Spirit of God continually hovers in the eternal creating act which makes of man the inexhaustible wonder worker, born of nature and of Spirit. "Deep melodies wander through his soul from Supreme Wisdom." All the wisdom of the ages slumbers somewhere in the people's mind, and it is your job in the local parish as well as in the great community of mankind "to make it know itself and the divinity that speaks through it."

To paraphrase Emerson's famous lines, "the true preacher can be known by this, that he deals out to the people" *their* "life passed through the fire of [*his* feeling and] thought."

(continued from page 10)

an open inquiry such as envisaged in this long-range proposal seem essential if the complex ethical problems that men face in public life are to be dealt with realistically, if the searching questions men have to ask of our traditional religious experience in American culture are to be faced honestly and candidly, and if the efforts of theologians to interpret the experience of men in public life are to be given a fair hearing. The expectation of the persons who have thought through this proposal is that the Institute could contribute to developing in American public life a core of leaders who are able to make clear and explicit to a great number of people the moral and religious context of their decisions and to bring other persons from many vocations and institutions into more serious exploration of the relation of American religious and moral resources to the formation of public policies.

This report began with quotations from ecumenical documents; so it closes with another quotation from a report to the Evanston Assembly:

> "It is quite clear . . . that a number of issues concerning the implications of the Christian faith on daily life require serious and long-term study which cannot be done at occasional meetings. There are not only many fields on which theology as such is not competent at all, but even issues of a genuinely theological nature which badly require further study, especially in the field of social and political ethics. In both cases, the Church as an organized community needs the special efforts of competent laymen in order to understand the present world as it is, and consequently to make an intelligent impact on the life of modern society. These 'frontier problems,' as they are sometimes termed, call for a new type of teaching in the Church, which is substantiated not only by the lonely work of a theological professor in his study or by the ecclesiastical pronouncements of an assembly of church leaders, lay or clerical. The new teaching must be undergirded by the daily experiences made by men and women in secular life, and elaborated in a sort of team work whereby the shrewdest minds of the theological and the scientific world work together permanently, or at any rate for a considerable period."[3]

3. *Ibid.;* "The Laity—the Christian in His Vocation," pp. 41-42.

A Profile of Christian Action Membership: A Report and Interpretation of a Recent Questionnaire

Resource and Emphasis Committee of Christian Action

The typical member of Christian Action is a professional worker in the Protestant church—probably a pastor or a teacher. He keeps himself informed on the attempts of the church to relate itself to social problems by reading *Christianity and Society, Christian Century, Christianity and Crisis* and possibly *Social Action*. He relies upon *The Reporter* and the *New York Times* as his major non-religious reading to keep him informed on public affairs.

The public issues which exercise him most at present, besides international relations, are the various ramifications of civil liberties, desegregation, and mccarthyism, although he is very concerned about four or five general problem areas.

In addition to his deep involvement in activities of the church, the Christian Action member seeks to express social concern about such problems through work in two voluntary associations—probably the American Civil Liberties Union, ADA, NAACP, or the local PTA.

The average Christian Action member would like to study the ethical and religious responsibilities of his particular professional group but has very few proposals to make as to how such a critical attempt at self-understanding might be undertaken.

The participation of the typical member in Christian Action organization is largely through personal contact with other members and the reading of the literature of the movement rather than through active participation in local chapters or committees of the organization.

This portrait of a member of Christian Action is deduced from a questionnaire survey conducted this past winter by the Resource and Emphasis Committee. The conclusions are based on a sample of approximately 30 percent of the listed membership. (Two hundred ninety-four questionnaires, representing 338 members, were returned out of 1,250 sent.) The returns possibly represent a bias toward a portrayal of the most active membership, since the act of filling out a questionnaire is itself an indication of a degree of interest in the organization probably not present in the members who failed to participate in the survey. But the results, we believe, should be considered in general a fairly accurate picture of present membership.

The survey was made in order that the Resource and Emphasis Committee could re-examine the purposes, functions and program of the total organization in the light of the actual resources that are available to us, given the nature of our membership. The committee wishes to plan realistically for the future work of CA in relation to the membership's occupational background, its patterns of serious reading about religion and society, the issues which now most concern it, the channels of influence it has through the political and economic associations in the nation and in local communities, and the kind of relationship the national organization has with members. Only with such information can our leadership discuss concretely such questions as these: What is our membership now doing that we can aid critically and constructively? And what needs to be done through the contacts the national organization has with membership to develop common convictions while making significantly articulate new expressions of Christian concern, and to devise a flexible yet integrated program in which our individual members and local chapters can become meaningfully involved?

I

Let us look more intensively first, then, at the nature of our membership.

The overwhelming fact about our membership is that its main institutional and occupational center is the Protestant church. A good estimate would be that at least 75% of our members are professional leaders in the church. They are pastors (35.3%), church administrators (8.3%), chaplains and student Y secretaries (3.5%), or they are in categories largely composed of people preparing for careers in church work (students 17.1%) or teaching subjects deeply involved in religion and ethics (teachers 17.4%). The contact of the organization with people in vocations outside the church is very limited. Housewives (6.5%), and the traditional professions of medicine (1.8%) and law (.9%) compose all but 9.2 percent of the remaining membership.

There is also a great homogeniety in the reading habits of our membership. The community of religious discourse and the significant symbols of the Christian Action membership are not hard to locate. Within the church the four publications listed above as the intellectual meat of the typical member compose 66.8 percent of the listings of periodicals most helpful for Christian ethical insight. The importance of these publications is seen further in the fact that apparently no more than two or three religious publications are read regularly. The reader interest configurations for the non-church journals are not quite so concentrated as for religious publications, but 62.5 percent of the listings of periodicals particularly significant and helpful are represented by *The Reporter* (which is by far the most popular journal, being listed by 55.6% of the membership and representing 27.3% of the listings), *The New York Times, Harpers, Progressive, Time, Saturday Review,* and *Atlantic.*

One issue—civil liberties—dominates the social concerns of our membership. Sixty percent name it as a special concern, while desegregation, a closely allied issue, appears almost as much on the minds of Christian Action people. The international policy debates on which our membership desires most to be heard are our American technical assistance and economic development programs for impoverished countries and the United States' approach to Red China. One domestic welfare issue is uppermost in the minds of our membership—public housing. With the mention of "McCarthyism," again chiefly a civil liberties issue, we have named the issues which at least 30 percent of our membership checked and 57 percent of the checks given 18 issues listed in the questionnaire. "Labor problems" and "public education" are the chief interests added to the questionnaire list, along with a strong write-in emphasis on dealing with the local aspects of social issues. Clearly the more traditional concerns of the Protestant social gospel movement dominate here: race relations, labor, public welfare (housing and education), the welfare and growth aspects of foreign relations, with priority given in the present to the defense of political freedoms.

The voluntary associations outside the church in which our members spend time clearly reflect the kinds of issues which concern them. Six associations represent 62.9 percent of the groups listed: American Civil Liberties Union, Americans for Democratic Action, Parent Teachers Association, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the League of Women Voters, in order of highest to lowest participation of the membership. One member usually participates actively in no more than one or two of these groups. They have almost no active participation in the major political parties (4.1% mention the Democratic Party, almost none the Republican Party). They have little organizational involvement in business or labor associations, and only slightly more in academic associations such as the American Economic Association. Their channels of group influence outside the church are confined chiefly to pressure groups, social service, and local educational associations.

What our members do in their daily work becomes, in light of all the data we have examined, the most important channel of influence they have. They are for the most

part men and women in educational and religious work, which has as part of its task the clarification for other people of their responsibilities and involvement in public affairs in light of their Christian faith. They are deeply concerned with the role they are to play in the church, about proper "standards of success." They are so absorbed in their task they express worry about "overcommitment," and "the proper division of their time." Fifty-two percent of our members sampled responded favorably to a suggestion that it would be advisable "to initiate study of ethical and religious responsibility by groups of Christians within your vocation." But only 22 percent of the Christian Action constituency offered any suggestions for how such a study might be undertaken. These were, with few exceptions, vague and highly limited proposals indicating that almost no critical and sustained self-examination was going on in the life of the church among occupational groups.

The contact of the Christian Action organization with its membership is chiefly through its publications. Membership is in the main a personal support of the principles of the movement, rather than participation in organized activities with other Christian Action members. At most only 3.84 percent of the membership has attended more than one annual national conference—the major occasion for bringing the members into some conversation across vocational lines and for evolving together a long-term program. An additional 9.75 percent had attended a national conference once.

The local chapters at present are not significant centers of activity for most Christian Action members. Only 8.6 percent of the members have contact often with a local chapter and only 19.5 percent have even an occasional contact; this contact—whether rated as "often" or "occasional"—does not represent much more than a fourth of all activity carried on in behalf of Christian Action. Only 2.7 percent of the membership is involved "often" in committee work and 8.6 percent "occasionally." About 16 percent of our membership at least occasionally contacts Christian Action members at denominational meetings. Obviously no very sustained corporate study or work is going on in the organization and very little "caucusing" is done by members at important meetings in the life of the church to see if a common position can be reached on activities they wish Protestantism to pursue in order to make its thought more meaningful and relevant to decisions men face in public affairs.

II

What are some of the implications of this self-portrait for the Christian Action program in the future?

A.

One of the primary purposes of Christian Action has been to guide its members into responsible social action. Relative to this, it is significant that, on the one hand, many comments on the returned questionnaires indicated concern and even worry about social and political problems as they are faced on a local level and in one's day to day employment, and yet on the other hand, few comments displayed that any deep and sustained thought had gone into the development of a Protestant strategy to meet those problems. It is apparent that much work needs to be done along these lines, and that Christian Action could well turn its attention, in its publications, meetings, and conferences, toward such a task.

The fact is that each person exists within what may be called his or her "sphere of influence," and if effective Christian social action is to occur, it must occur within that sphere. The problems involved here are, of course, manifold. It is not easy to develop a strategy to work responsibly within one's sphere of influence. It is often "too close" for one to see the opportunities which exist and the possibilities which are at hand. Because of this, many sensitive Christians, in both clerical and lay positions, feel frustrated, isolated, unable to express their understanding of the meaning of the gospel for our age. What is needed, and desired, is assistance in coming to a consciousness of this actual sphere of influence and help in planning strategies for the wise use of

energies in this sphere toward the end of the "responsible society.'"

Many social action and special interest groups have avoided this task because of its difficulties, and have spent most of their time developing policies on issues. Now, it is important on certain occasions to write and issue statements of policy on crucial issues that arise in the course of history, and it is important to support special interest groups which will exert pressures and "act" in specific instances toward the development of responsible legislation and the mitigation of existent injustices. However, such "social action" in and of itself can too easily become a subtle form of social irresponsibility. For it is often the case that persons signing statements and supporting pressure groups feel their consciences have been cleared by such actions, while they neglect to see or understand the huge task that lies on their very doorstep, requiring, demanding, a Christian response. This is the task of bringing our understanding of the Christian gospel to bear on the crucial political and social issues of the day as we face them concretely and personally in our day to day employment. As one member of Christian Action phrased it, we have often neglected to realize that Christian action is not "extra-curricular," it is what we are doing every day. This does not mean we are to deal solely with "local issues" as abstracted from issues on the international and national scenes; on the contrary, this means rather that matters of world and national concern are related to one's personal sphere of influence, and if the Christian is actively and effectively to participate in the formation of public policy on these issues, he must not ignore this relationship.

Let us examine this in relation to the membership of Christian Action: As indicated on the questionnaire returns, the majority of our members are in official positions within the churches. It may well be that Christian Action could contribute greatly to these members and to the field of Christian social action in general by an examination (1) of the role of the minister in the life of our society, (2) of the realistic possibilities which await realization within local congregations, denominational groups, and ecumenical agencies, and (3) of means by which clergymen can bring those persons within their influence into an awareness of the real depths of meaning of the Christian faith and into an understanding of the relevance of this faith for life in our age. Few clergy or teachers are likely to become active in governmental groups, business associations, political party organizations, unions, or in other organizations where major policy decisions are made. But, as one Executive Council member wrote, just because our members are in church life professionally, "they have perhaps determining influence over what kind of church program—on parish, community, and national levels—will be developed to bring men in these associations an opportunity for reflection upon and study of the meaning of the Christian faith for the decisions they must make." Hence, Christian Action could well give attention to the interaction of church and society, to the kind of Christian ministry we believe is required by the peculiar "storms of our times," and to the types of activities which would assist in the task of bringing the gospel to bear on the social and political problems which face us.

Similar attention should be given to the other occupations represented in Christian Action. The responsibilities and problems of housewives, lawyers, doctors, teachers, factory workers, and so on could well provide a profitable area for examination by Christian Action in its publications and programs.

In other words, one of Christian Action's main functions lies in the realm of analyzing the structure of our society, helping persons in our society define their roles in it, aiding in the discovery of potential channels for the effective output of energy, and being a resource in the development of realistic and responsible Christian social action on the "grass-roots" level.

B.

The questionnaire results indicating the "current issues" in which our members have the greatest interest help us little in determining the kind of relationship we want

to public life. The report of a member as to what issues are most important to him becomes meaningful to an organization such as ours only when we know more precisely the context of the decision. Is an issue given priority because a man has the greatest opportunity to do something about it? Is an issue held important for the action of people in an institution where one works, for a pressure group to which one belongs, or for a precinct organization of a political party in which one occasionally participates? Is the decision of issue priority made by a person with responsibility for developing a program of action, or is it the expression of someone with little price to pay for his decision?

We are as an organization in the American culture dealing with the most complex social structure in the world. It is inadequate for us to talk of membership concern for a cluster of issues such as civil liberties, public welfare, and economic development as if we were dealing with men who share in the same fashion in policy decisions. If our membership is largely that of ministers and professional church workers then Christian Action obviously has tremendous responsibility for clarifying for them the different ways in which Roman Catholic and Protestant churches have related themselves to the associational structure of our society, and for encouraging debate upon the merits of the various approaches. The different levels of policy making and policy approval are probably as crucial distinctions for the educational work of the church as the traditional social categories of sex, age, and the "interested" layman upon which our churches now rely so heavily in developing programs.

Democracy rests upon the general assumption that discussion of public issues goes on before a rational and concerned public, capable of some sustained and critical response to the decisions of leaders. Men differ in the extent of their direct participation in policy making, but on every level they are involved in living with the consequences of action taken. The possibility of their being moral men is related to their discovery of significance and meaning in these actions and of channels for responding to them. Therefore, it would seem that as wide an education as possible in the churches about the moral, religious, and social aspects of policy making is imperative. Let all who are willing to make the sacrifices of time, energy, and disciplined study to understand something of the nature of policy making come into discussion of it. There are in American life "attentive publics" on various policy issues with which our leaders must carry on illuminating discussions. There are also small groups of creative policy and opinion leaders in every community and in every church—labor leaders, business leaders, popular press managers, etc., who greatly desire help in understanding thir roles. Can the activity of local churches, as encouraged by Christian Action members, expand and deepen the experiences of these interested constituencies and leader groups?

Thus far, there has been considerable use of a phrase—*policy decisions*—to describe a major point of focus for Christian Action. What does the term mean? For many men, it designates a general approach to society, a description of what men experience as a basic function and requirement of public life. Should Christian Action choose this approach as one focus of work it would mean that an important choice had been made as to the nature of genuine society in the modern world. The questions surrounding a policy or non-policy approach to public life are posed in crucial form by a number of ideologies in America. The "classical liberals" and the "political groupists"—to use a few of the labels—place little stress upon political participation as such, emphasize the specialized and autonomous nature of interest groups, the difficulties of and limited need for achieving cooperation between groups, except through that which "happens" in the competitive market. At the other extreme are the "totalitarian planners" and "integrators" through the power of the state, equally unable to understand the processes of policy formation in a democratic society.

Perhaps we can agree among our members that our national problems are charac-

terized not so much by the numbers or bigness of organized groups, such as unions, business, agriculture, and mass communications, as by the necessity to achieve coordination and integration of the resources of these units to form public policies, such as economic growth in a developing democracy. The basic problem is this: Given a civilization in which there are a diversity of powerful economic and social forces, how do Christians attempt to keep vital these various forces and yet harmonize them in such a way that together they will form a unity of civilization?

Any meaningful discussion of Protestant theology must be formulated in relation to the problems of American democracy in their most overall and cricual dimensions—the need and the possibility of achieving public policy within a free and just society.

One need look at only a few aspects of policy formation to see that great theological and ethical questions are at stake in this aspect of public life. (1) Policy represents a program of action which is the expression of the combined decisions of a number of people working within an institution or movement. The policy of a government bureau, a business, a trade association, a union, a magazine, or a party is the result of an attempt by men to reconcile a number of interests and to understand the relationship of a number of factors. The policy decision is never simply the adding up of discrete claims, but a reconstitution of them into a new program and new relationship.

Is not the religious context of our society the final basis for the reconciling of interests which goes on continually within democratic politics? Christian community claims to be creative because men in their relationships view themselves and others as finite and prone to be centered in themselves, yet capable of love and redeemable through faith and grace. Therefore, public policy is to emerge out of the interaction of a number of groups, each of which is to be denied absolute truth and allegiance, and each of which may have the potentiality of being a partial instrument of God's judging and redeeming action.

(2) Formation of policy is not possible apart from considerations in which priorities of objectives and claims are established for a particular situation. Tragedy is always present in policy decisions, some values and men having to be preferred to others. The very nature of policy making in a highly pluralistic society involves the continual discovery of the limited area on which agreement can be achieved between the many groups whose resources are needed for the carrying out of functions essential to the society—economic stability, containment of communism, welfare expenditures for distressed people, etc. There is no action in public life today which does not call for sacrifice, for risk, for doing favor without "proper appreciation by the recipient." The Christians' wrestling with the meaning of the Cross as the revelation of how constructive work goes on in the world has an immediate and inescapable relevance.

In summary then, all policy making decisions are concrete, dynamic, and relational. They are made complex by the necessary consideration of a variety of claims and factors. Speculation and reflection go on about moral principles but never in abstraction from the real world. In a policy decision, a man responds to claims of particular persons and groups with varying influence and authority. A just settlement in democratic politics will usually be one arrived at in a context of give and take in which no one gets his whole way. Values and moral principles always must be dealt with in relation to each other. The neat isolation for analytical purposes of technical factors, empirical data, moral principles, historical continuities, and ultimate loyalties always distorts the creative, imaginative, combination of facets of experience which takes place in actual policy formation.

The general public statement of dedicated church groups asking some person or organization other than its own people to "do something" actually enters this world in very limited fashion. One of the great tasks of Christian Action is to help the Protestant churches develop in each community the settings in which hard study of the Christian witness and the actual situation confronting men goes on in intimacy

and trust, in which they are made aware of the theological and ethical insights implied in their past actions, in which they have their minds opened to new interpretations of their vocational and public roles.

C.

Christian Action is needed as an instrument by which it is possible for its members to offer a corporate witness in current national issues. As a fellowship it does represent a real consensus on many of these issues. It needs at times to become more visible so that it can become a symbol that will give guidance and encouragement to many who do not yet belong to it. This function of Christian Action does not mean that it should continually issue statements. There is a point at which the issuing of statements yields diminishing returns. The points of emphasis should be carefully chosen and they should be made a subject of very wide study and discussion. Corporate witness may at the right times be a form of action.

The consensus which seems to appear in the results of the questionnaire is found chiefly in relation to civil liberties, desegregation and several phases of foreign policy, especially those involving foreign economic aid and a more open-minded approach to the Asian problems. Christian Action obviously desires a more constructive, a more generous foreign policy with less emphasis on military power than is now the case. The statement made about the offshore islands, calling for a policy that would avoid the risk of war over those islands and for respect for the attitude of our allies clearly represented a consensus among the members. Also, it is probable that the willingness to reconsider the recognition of Communist China as a part of a broad settlement which was part of a report made by the Boston chapter was in line with the opinions of most of the members.

There are three areas in which far more study and discussion is needed in the future.

One of these is the clarification of our own minds on the many issues which will become urgent as negotiations proceed with Russia. American public opinion will need to be influenced in this next period by those who have no illusions about Communism and yet who are flexible enough to respond to real changes in the situation. There is a danger that a kind of American ideology will keep us from taking advantage of opportunities which develop. It is not enough to keep repeating that the communists never change their objectives, only their tactics and so maintain a rigid posture. It may well be that the communists do not change their conscious objectives; but it remains possible for a change of tactics to create a new objective situation which will in fact change the communists in spite of themselves. Cannot Christian Action remain alert during this fluid period and, from time to time, make its convictions known? Could various units emphasize different parts of the world so that the whole fellowship can be better informed?

A second area of concern should be the more structural economic problems. The questionnaire revealed little interest in economic issues. This may be far too much a reflection of our present prosperity. Who in the churches today is on the alert concerning the deeper economic issues? The main issue is the capacity of our economy to continue to expand without finally leading to new catastrophes. Who in the churches is thinking about the function of the state in relation to economic life? In the main this problem is either ignored or discussed in purely negative terms under the assumption that the initiative of the state in economic life is usually undesirable. The present administration has been operating on assumptions about the relation of public to private enterprise which are open to serious question. We see this in its attitude toward public power, in its niggardly approach to the question of public housing and in its handling of the polio vaccine. There is little willingness to recognize the responsibility of the national government to deal imaginatively with the problems of welfare as the only agency in many cases that has the authority, the power and the resource which are adequate for the task. The know-how of the American people in so many areas is accompanied by a strange

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CONVERSATION: COMMENT ON PREVIOUS ARTICLES

It is not totally fortuitous that articles in two recent issues of this journal have borne the term "conversation" in their titles. It is one of the functions of Christian Action to be a fellowship in which conversation takes place. It is the major function of Christianity and Society *to provide a channel through which the members of our fellowship may increase their involvement in this enterprise. To this end, we here inaugurate what we hope will be found worthy to become a continuing feature; a forum to which all readers are invited to contribute notes and comment on the ideas that find expression in our pages.*

THE EDITORS

The Context of Communication

I would like to applaud David D. Lloyd's article, "The Christianity and Modern Man Lectures" in the last issue, and second his plea for the creation of "Laymen's Institutes" throughout the country. Mr. Lloyd, in an indirect way, has given us a fresh perspective upon the thorny problem of "theology for the laymen."

Most of us, it seems, would agree with the comment of the *Christian Century* in its review of the Doubleday series. "It is high time that the new theological currents found expression in non-technical language which the educated laymen, in and outside the church, can understand. At the same time this needs to be done without watering-down content, or over-simplifying issues." The quote is significant because it expresses exactly what one hears so often these days—we must span the gap between the theological renaissance and the Protestant laymen.

But I think that the *Century's* statement is significant for another reason. It reflects, though quite indirectly, an interpretation of theological communication that is very popular among Protestants. We Protestants, by and large, tend to treat communication as a function of the written word, and thus to minimize the importance of the context or setting in which communication takes place. We are inclined to emphasize the content of the books or material as being determinative in Christian education. Our preoccupation with content and consequent neglect of context shows up in all sectors of Protestant church life. It is interesting to note how many of us, even after years of exposure to the religious education movement, still think of the church school largely as a matter of good curriculum.

Perhaps this stress upon the content of what is communicated accounts partially for the kinds of questions we ask of popular religious books for the laymen. "Does it communicate?" This question, fast becoming one of the cliches of our time, implies that "it"—the content of the book—does the communicating. Another touchstone of communicability is the degree of complexity of language, the gauge of the words used in the book. But it is not necessarily true that Christian theology, pruned of all esoteric terms and translated into "non-technical" language, will even then be grasped and understood by the occasional reader. For example, two years ago, when I was serving a church in Denver, a group of educated laymen wanted to start a study group focusing upon the best in contemporary theology. I encouraged them to start by reading a book explicitly designed to be an introduction to the contemporary theological renaissance. Yet the laymen, after reading it, dismissed the book as boring and obscure. Now, in retrospect, it is apparent that the obscurity of the essay was not due to technical or difficult words. It was obscure because these readers did not share the *context* of belief presupposed on every page. Through my seminary training and fellowship in the church, I had automatically accepted the inarticulate presuppositions behind the printed word, and thus could "fill in the gaps" and make the necessary connections. Out of this experience came an almost unavoidable conclusion: one almost had to be theologically trained

before it was possible to appreciate this book as an excellent "beginner's" introduction to contemporary theology. And this, I submit, is the fate of many a theological primer. Though designed for the laymen, it is read almost exclusively by the minister.

But it need not be. The Protestant layman must be given an opportunity for sustained theological training, a context of continuous study and face-to-face conversations with a well-trained teacher. And then many laymen will come to appreciate these "primers"—and go far beyond them—if they are encouraged to study in a disciplined fashion, and are backed by the resources of lectures and small group discussions.

This is why Mr. Lloyd's suggestion of establishing "Laymen's Institutes" makes such sense. So far there have not been many other laymen's center for theological study like the "Christianity and Modern Man Lectures" in Washington. But we should not accept the defeatist line that such enterprises are inevitably restricted to cities like Washington with a near-by seminary, etc. In Denver a small core of ministers and laymen, without some of the obvious advantages of Washington, have been slowly working toward a Laymen's Institute that is adapted to their needs and resources. The Washington experiment can and must be repeated elsewhere. Our inability to do so stems not so much from our lack of "name" professors or local seminaries, as it does from the Protestant minister's maddening skepticism about the capacities of the laymen, coupled with our misreading of the nature of theological communication.

I hope that the stress upon the context of communication is not misconstrued as implying that well-written books for the laymen are comparatively unimportant. Not at all. Rather this is the way to make better use of the laymen's books now in print. One wonders, for instance, what will happen to the Doubleday books once they leave the book shop. How will the Protestant parish use Alexander Miller's book, *The Renewal of Man?* Will it be just "farmed out" sporadically by the minister? Or will this valuable and entertaining book be bought, studied and discussed over a long period by various small groups of laymen. I hope the latter is done, as well as the former. For that is the way that *The Renewal of Man* will, as we say, "really communicate."

Also, quite obviously, we need better laymen's books, theological works that speak knowingly to the different *contexts* of life in which men make their crucial decisions. All too often the "real life situation" becomes a gimmick, a sermonic illustration which does nothing more than coat the stiff theological meat with "human" interest. There is a pressing demand today for laymen's material in which Christian theology speaks to and illuminates the decision-making crises that a person faces in American society.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lloyd's challenge should not go unnoticed. He seems to be asking an important question of all of us. "What about a Laymen's Institute in your community?" Perhaps this is the clue to our task of communicating the Gospel. I believe it is.

Robert W. Lynn
New York, N. Y.

Liberalism Revisited

David Burgess' article in the winter issue shines like a good deed in a naughty world. For it appeared in the midst of a spate of books and articles in which Liberalism both as a word and as a movement has been given a thorough work-over by high-minded neo-Conservatives of whom the most eloquent and influential probably is Russell Kirk. It is a most salutary exercise to lay Burgess' piece alongside an article by Kirk called "The Dissolution of Liberalism," which appeared in *The Commonweal* (issue of January 7).

What first needs to be said about Kirk's general position was in fact said by Reinhold Niebuhr in his winter issue Editorial, namely, that while an indignant and energetic Liberalism exaggerated the manipulability of society to the neglect of its "given" structures (emphasized *artifact,* that is to say, to the neglect of *organism)* "scholars, like Russell Kirk, who have discovered the realism of an Edmund Burke always tend to mix this realism with an uncritical ac-

ceptance of inequality. . . ." Kirk needs not only to be chided, he should be roundly rebuked: for in his *Commonweal* article he is betrayed into saying, "Poverty is not of itself an evil; nor inequality; nor death." At this point a pious traditionalism which begins to claim a Christian name heeds the critical service of Christian theology: for what Biblical religion says about poverty and inequality—as about death—is that they *are* evils, evils out of which God may bring good. But as between even a sound theology of poverty and a ferocious reaction against it, let's have the rebellion and make do without the theology. And if the choice is between Kirk—who hasn't even got his theology straight—and Burgess, it is easier still.

In still another recent article (*New Leader,* April 25) Clinton Rossiter has a study of the dynamics of American Conservatism which reveals among other things how easily Kirk-type intellectuals, who presently operate as a "goad to the conscience of the Right" and as a restraint upon a doctrinaire Left, could be betrayed into functioning as the ideologues of reaction. For the time being they seem to stay roughly within what Rossiter calls "the Roosevelt coalition," for they have enough political horse-sense to see that the Brickers and the Bridges, given their heads, would do more violence to the inheritance in a twelve-month than the New Deal-Fair Deal did in two decades. But if they let their wholesome love for the open society be formalized as a doctrinaire opposition to every form of "collectivism" they can do violence to the very cause they care for. There was more political individualism in Ed Murrow's half-hour coverage of the British election the other night than one could easily find in American suburbia. We could do—in American terms—what Britain has done about public power and medical services without putting the authentic inheritance in any kind of jeopardy.

Today's college youth is not so much "old before his time," as Dave Burgess says, but young after his time. But if we are to help him be his age it will require not only that we tutor him in the great inheritance—we do this in fact with increasing effect—but that we help him see that it is a corrupt inheritance, subject always to the perversion of pride and power and greed. And we must help him not only to be his cultural age, but to be his contemporary age: for his task is not only one of appropriation, but of constant criticism and adaptation in the authentic Liberal sense.

Alexander Miller
Stanford, Calif.

The Illusion of Revisitation

There is so much that is right in David S. Burgess' eloquent article "Liberalism Revisited" (*Christianity and Society,* Winter, 1954-55) that it seems a pity to call attention to what is wrong. But what does appear wrong to me is so near the center of his thesis that a criticism must be offered. Mr. Burgess rightly regrets the demise of a vigorous social liberalism. And he rightly recognizes that we liberals are under the necessity of finding the means to deal with a new situation. But the policy which he then advocates seems grossly oversimplified because it has been determined not so much by the needs of the new situation as by a nostalgia for battles long ago.

Mr. Burgess remembers the 30's, when his political philosophy could be summed up in the statement: "I aimed to uplift the underdog." But the power structure of our society is not now what it was in the 30's, so he asks the question: "Who is the underdog of today?" He then provides us with a very helpful list of contemporary underdogs and suggests some improvements in political technique on the basis of past experience of liberalism.

Now surely it is true that championing the cause of the defenseless is a "legitimate aim of genuine liberalism in every generation." But the difficulty with Mr. Burgess' discussion is that it seems content to structure present policy in terms of a situation that is past. Do not the basic structural changes which have taken place in our society demand some basic *structural* change in the liberal response? For instance, Mr. Burgess states that "the industrial worker is no longer the underdog." But does this

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REVIEWS

The Christian Faith Series: Theology for Laymen

The Renewal of Man, by Alexander Miller; Doubleday & Co., New York; 1955; 184 pp.; $2.95.

Doubleday is certainly to be commended for launching this series for intelligent laymen and preachers in the provinces. The choice of Reinhold Niebuhr as editor was a wise one. His name has the stamp of authority, and it sells books! Dr. Niebuhr, in turn, deserves credit for picking Professor Miller to open the series. Miller's fresh handling of justification by faith is a vivid restatement of the core of contemporary Protestant theology.

The book begins with a diagnosis of modern man, written in the context of questions raised in the writings of Arthur Koestler, Graham Greene and Robert Penn Warren. Man is at the end of his tether, tired of resolves and ready for rescue. The alternatives seem to be the Yogi or the Commissar, rejection or affirmation of nature and history. Yet each alternative is partial and moves by revulsion to its opposite. Professor Miller succinctly punctures contemporary spirituality. He has dealt previously with Communism, in his still valuable *The Christian Significance of Karl Marx.*

Rejecting piousity and power, he offers a third alternative. It is the Biblical "Covenant" faith. This faith involves a "lip-smacking, exurberant delight" in the created world, the dignity of man, and the recognition that man, though not a scoundrel, is a sinner. Man needs rescue. These affirmations inform the Hebrew faith, "The Religion That Is No Religion."

The third chapter, "A Religion to End All Religion," is the seed-packed core of the book. Luther's Copernican revolution in religion, says Miller, closes the door to piety as well as to good works. "The religious question is set aside as irrelevant." We are freed from religious anxiety. Salvation is God's act, not ours; and even faith *as a good work* is ruled out as a relapse into a religion from which we are freed.

Freed from anxiety, we are free for service in ethics, politics, education and vocation. A chapter is devoted to each. *Ethics* are the mores of the Christian community. They are neither rational nor experimental but concrete and contextual. *Politics* is neither an optional concern for the Christian nor a subsidiary channel of the Christian's "religious" concern for salvation. Miller's refutations are good. His illustrations hit life where life is lived. He gives rules of thumb which make that digit count. *Education* is treated in a way that talks sense to saints and scholars. A university's refusal to teach religion is often based on the just fear of parochial distortion, yet such a refusal threatens the integrity of the university's claim to treat all of life openly and honestly. Church and school represent two distinct approaches to the same body of material. *Vocation* is handled by a critical appraisal of Luther, which ably refutes the prejudiced priorities of mind over body and clergy over laity.

The book concludes with a brief chapter on the Church. Professor Miller shifts the load to Daniel Jenkins' book in the series. This is as it should be. What he says is good. The Church is a community of faith. Faith is the integrity of response of mind, heart and will through doctrine, worship and discipline. In the Church we learn that "the death of the self is the beginning of selfhood and . . . by what merciful mechanisms of grace the self is struck down."

There is a fundamental rightness about this book. Though we may quibble— a little here, a little there—there is little to question. One might question how Miller reasserts the Church after abolishing religion; but his aphorisms are not axioms. He, like the Bible, is to be taken seriously but not literally. The book is a delight to read, its thrusts are deft and deep. However, since it is written for laymen, there are two criteria by which to judge. It should have theological acumen. This it has in abundance. It should communicate. Miller does surprisingly well. This is not the pabulum

of Peale; the layman will need to chew, but chewing will aid digestion. One wishes, however, that he had cut the meat into smaller pieces (to mention Eliot, Fry, Malraux, Merton, Kierkegaard and Hopkins in one sentence is too much!) and that he had worked over the menu more, so that one could see better how the meal was going. Nonetheless, it is tasty and succulent.

JOHN E. BURKHART

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Doing the Truth: A Summary of Christian Ethics, by James A. Pike; Doubleday and Co., New York; 1955; 192 pp.; $2.95.

Characteristic of today's theological revival is the important and special role of ethics in an exposition of the Christian faith. More than any other man, Reinhold Niebuhr has shown ethics to be of the very heart of theology, and more than any other book, Emil Brunner's *The Divine Imperative,* has charted the way of its systematic treatment. One is therefore almost tempted to say it is symbolic that Dean Pike's *Doing the Truth* is the middle book of this five-volume *Christian Faith Series.*

The author claims that "there is nothing unique in the ideas" he presents and that "it is frankly an exercise in communication." This is consistent with the design of the series and it is the strength of Dr. Pike's writing. His broad experience in law, government, education, pastoral counseling and as a priest of the church provides him with the practical orientation so necessary in an effort to make the Christian affirmations meaningful to the Protestant laymen of our day.

The first part of the book takes a look at the shape of the Christian truth with an eye for its ethical relevance. The key concept for this relevance is said to be *vocation,* "the absolute claim of God upon the whole of life." Its summary expression is given in the Old Testament *Shema* and the "two great commandments" of the New Testament. Sin is man's rejection of his vocation. Through justification man experiences a new status of acceptance before God and a self-acceptance in his own heart. Herewith arises a new dynamic for the fulfillment of vocation: *thanksgiving.*

At this point the author makes his transition to the concrete situations in the complex and imperfect structuring of all human relations, corresponding roughly to the familiar "orders of creation," in which the Christian is called upon to make his decisions in "purity of heart." The transition chapter is on "Worship and Evangelism," and this is significant. All too generally the contemporary church, particularly on the lay level, considers worship and evangelism as special functions in almost complete detachment from the ethical concern of the Christian faith. Dean Pike is right in showing that gratitude, which finds its expression in worship and is the drive in evangelism, is also the dynamic in relating the gospel to the practical life. The liturgy of the church is a rich resource for ethics and our evangelism efforts would be more vital if they touched more directly the day to day responsibilities and decisions of men.

Probably the most pertinent question to be asked of this book is whether it can help the average layman interpret the routine and vital experiences of ordinary life in the dimensions of the Christian faith. Does the author establish contact between the common life and the insights of the faith, without at the same time misreading one and distorting the other? Here one must give an unenthusiastic affirmative answer. The discussion does move down the midstream of daily existence, dipping into many of the small things, the commonplace problems, concerns, defeats and triumphs of life. Happily also the basic Christian insights are not thinned down or lost in the process of transposing from the esoteric language of theologians to the "common currency" of laymen. The general intelligent reader will find that it speaks to his life situation and that the apologetic is meaningful if not always convincing.

It is unfortunate that the book begins with a most disappointing chapter on "Freedom and Responsibility." Certainly if this tremendous and complex problem has any place at all in this volume it deserves more than the superficial attention it receives here. Although there is a general improvement

after the opening chapter, one continues to sense that there is too much touch-and-go discussion and that important problems often receive only a fragmentary treatment. The longest chapter in the book is on "Sex, Marriage, and The Family." The discussion deals almost exclusively with sex and marriage, or rather, with sex in the marital and non-marital states. Certainly one cannot assume that the problem of the family today has received adequate attention by simply dealing with the sex question.

On the whole Dr. Pike's book, with its limitations, is still a creditable "exercise in communication," a good antidote to Norman Vincent Peale's communication of exercises. It augurs that the Christian faith can be both stated and related on the "popular" level.

RUFUS CORNELSEN

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mean that liberalism has now been fulfilled with respect to the industrial worker, and we are to turn our attention elsewhere? Or does this rather mean that liberalism must find the appropriate response to an utterly unique cultural phenomenon—that situation in which the vast army of industrial labor (especially with the advent of the Guaranteed Annual Wage) is acquiring not only the physical comforts of middle-class existence, but with them acquiring also the middle-class *mind?* It seems to me that the travail of liberalism arises not out of an inability to locate the underdog, but out of an uncertainty as to what it *means* to be a liberal today.

Similarly, there was a certain pathos about the battle of liberals against Joe McCarthy. We fought him so hard not simply because we were alarmed by this threat to democracy, but because this was a battle that could be understood unambiguously in terms of liberalism's traditional categories. It was a sort of recess from the age of the cobalt bomb and the lonely crowd. I heard Joe on the radio the other evening, and, I confess, I was nostalgic.

But the trouble with nostalgia is that it is based on a highly selective memory, and we seem to be remembering the wrong things. If the term "liberalism" denotes something of permanent validity, then that validity has to do with the inner meaning of liberalism—not with particular battle lines or specific modes of strategy and tactics. What is needed is not so much a revisitation as a fundamental reunderstanding, reinterpretation, redefinition, reappropriation, and then a reaffirmation—in terms of the new total cultural situation—of whatever may prove to be the permanent validity of the liberal tradition.

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inhibition against adequate efforts whenever the government is an essential agent—except in the case of national defense. There is a very large area here calling for fresh thinking by such a group as ours. One specific issue which may call for immediate study is the progress that has been made toward the establishment of the guaranteed annual wage. There are technical issues here but there are also involved modifications of our social and economic structure which call for careful evaluation from our point of view.

The third area where corporate witness on the part of Christian Action may be needed is in the development of a positive Christian alternative to the current popular revival of religion. This offers an opportunity. Are the organized churches sufficiently able to discriminate between Christian truth and the popular combination of American religiousness and a "peace of mind" gospel which tempt the churches themselves because they seem to increase their influence? This is an area in which Christian Action should work locally and nationally, by corporate witness and by stimulating its members to bear witness wherever they are. It may call at times for action in regard to the policies of local councils of churches and of other church bodies. Awareness of belonging to this fellowship may help many of our members to be true to their own best understanding of their faith.

"The prime concern of the Church is with its own integrity rather than with its public influence. And yet the two belong together: for in the very measure of its integrity the Church must press home upon the wider society the meaning of the new humanity, and of human and Christian solidarity. . . . But as to how the claim of God to the whole world of His making is to be made good: it is clear that this will be done less by Church pronouncements than by the penetration of the natural communities by men who know their godly business there. They must know that the service of justice is the service of God; that the integrity and vitality of the Republic of Letters is a crucial Christian interest since all truth is Christ's from whatever source it comes."—Alexander Miller in *The Renewal of Man.*